

The South Danvers Observer

The Funeral of George Peabody

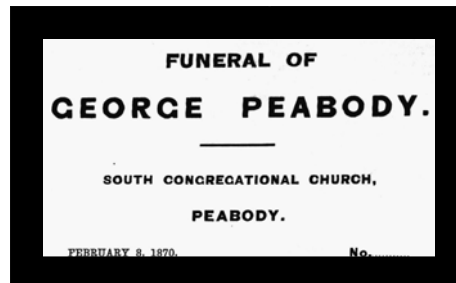
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Inside this issue:

George Peabody's Last Visit Home	2
The Voyage of the <i>H.M.S. Monarch</i>	3
The Funeral of George Peabody (Continued)	4
The Funeral of George Peabody (Continued)	5
The Funeral of George Peabody (Continued)	6
The Funeral of George Peabody (Continued)	7
The Funeral of George Peabody (Conclusion)	8



*It is a great mystery,
but I shall know all soon.*

—Only a short time after George Peabody spoke these words, he died. It was 11:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 4th, 1869. Word of his death in London arrived in the United States the next day via the Transatlantic Cable that George Peabody helped fund.

Could Peabody have imagined the scale of the funeral that would follow? Perhaps. After all, he was aware of his own prominence in Great Britain and the United States. He had received numerous awards from both countries. Certainly he understood that his funeral would be impressive.

And yet, it is unlikely he could have envisioned just how unique and how monumental his funeral would become. Or rather how unique and how monumental his *funerals*

would become. For Peabody had not one but **three** funerals. Not one but **two** burials.

The first funeral and burial were held in Westminster Abbey, a place reserved for only the most prominent citizens of England. That George Peabody was not British made the honor to his memory even more significant. Once it was understood that England wished to commemorate Peabody before he was laid in his final resting place in Harmony Grove Cemetery, his body was embalmed. While embalming wasn't prevalent in the United States until then, after the Civil War it slowly grew more common. And so, the embalming fluids used to preserve George Peabody's body, which contained arsenic and mercury, were of great interest to the public.

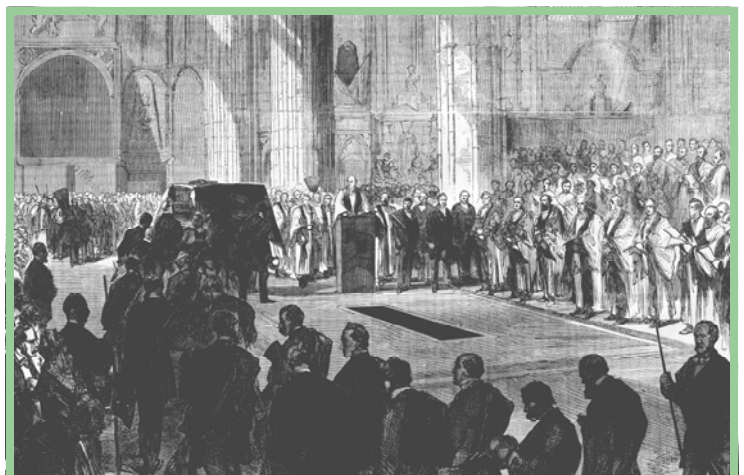
Peabody was buried in Westminster Abbey from November 12 to December 11, 1869.

(Continued on Page 4)

"By Request of the Queen, the remains of Mr. Peabody were . . . transferred to Her Majesty's Ship [the] Monarch. The Monarch and [the U.S. Ship] Plymouth sailed from Portsmouth, Eng. . . . Great preparations have been made by the people of Portland to receive the remains and a solemn service was performed . . . at the City Hall. After the funeral services they were conveyed to a magnificent Funeral Car . . . and escorted by two hundred United States Soldiers to Peabody, Mass., and there placed in a superb Catafalque in the Peabody Institute where they remained lying in state until the day of the funeral."

From Mr. Peabody and Friends

The Burial
at
Westminster
Abbey



George Peabody's Last Visit Home

—When George Peabody set out for Liverpool to board the *Scotia* for a voyage to New York on May 29, 1869, there is little doubt he knew this would be his last excursion home. Despite his age and frailty, despite the toll of the voyage and his travel during those next three months, he seemed driven by the sense he had little time left to complete his life's work.

He arrived in New York on June 8th and was met by five of the Peabody Institute Library Trustees and two of his nephews who lived in the city. Peabody stayed with Samuel Wetmore and his family for two days. From there he traveled by train to Boston to visit another friend, Samuel Dana. While in Boston, he attended the Peace Jubilee before returning to Salem to enjoy some time with his nephew, George Peabody Russell and his wife. While there, Peabody worked with his nephew to arrange his second donation of another million dollars to the Peabody Southern Education Fund.

By early July, Peabody had recovered enough from the voyage to make the trek to Newport, R.I. where he met with the Trustees of the Southern Education Fund to announce his new gift.

The strain of travel wore on him. Despite that, he returned to Peabody, Massachusetts, visited the Peabody Institute and then went to Georgetown to stay with his sister Judith and husband, Robert S. Daniels. During that brief visit, he viewed the new town church and library which he had funded and then pushed on to attend the dedication of the Peabody Institute in Danvers on July 14th. On July 16th, the Peabody Institute in Peabody held a reception for its Founder. In attendance were Massachusetts Governor William Claflin, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Charles Francis Adams, Charles Sumner and other dignitaries.

At this time, Peabody read of William Wilson Corcoran's recent donation to the National Gallery of Art; he found that news of interest. Because Peabody's continued frailty alarmed his nephew, Russell wrote to Corcoran to ask if he could make arrangements for Peabody to visit White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia. He hoped the change in air and the reported ability of the waters to restore health would be just what his uncle needed.

In an uncharacteristic move, Peabody agreed to have his nephew and wife accompany him on the train south. Previously, Peabody always preferred to travel alone. He enjoyed the freedom of being able to move about from place to place on his own terms. This concession to his nephew revealed just how sick Peabody truly felt.

Peabody and his nephew and family arrived at the resort on July 23rd. The resort had a number of cottages to allow guests more privacy. Peabody

shared a cottage on Baltimore Row with Robert E. Lee, William Wilson Corcoran and a few others. The visit did little to improve Peabody's health. He seldom left the cottage, not even to attend the Peabody Ball, which was given in his honor for his creation of the Southern Education Fund. He did manage to sit for a number of photographs with the former Confederate generals, photographs which are now famous. He made a few more donations, one to Washington and Lee College, where Robert E. Lee was president. On August 16th, Peabody was able to leave his cottage to enjoy a supper in the hotel's public dining room.

Of course, with the recent end of the Civil War, not everyone in the north understood Peabody's last donations. William Lloyd Garrison penned an angry letter to *The Independent*, chastising Peabody for "his own cordial esteem and regard for the high honor, integrity, and heroism of the Southern people!!"

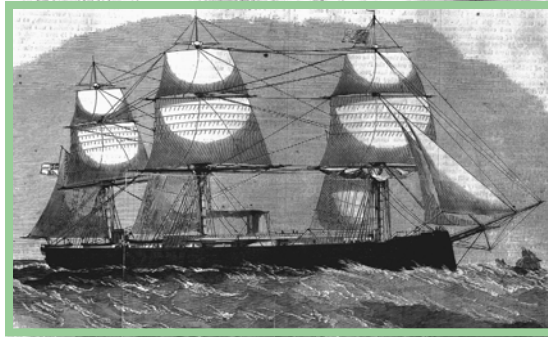
On August 30th, Peabody left the Springs and took the train north, traveling in a special car arranged by the railroad's president, John Work Garrett. He arrived in Salem on September 10th, ordered his tomb built at Harmony Grove, made another \$50,000 donation to the Peabody Institute in Peabody, traveled once again to Newport, R.I., to see John Pendleton Kennedy regarding the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, made a final visit to the Institute in Baltimore and finally sailed from New York on the *Scotia* to London, arriving on October 8, 1869.

Peabody had hoped to spend some time traveling in Europe but his final voyage home was his last trip anywhere. His precarious health quickly deteriorated and he went to stay with his friend, Sir Curtis Lampson. It was there, less than a month after arriving in London that George Peabody died.



Baltimore Row Cottages at
White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia
Peabody stayed in a similar cottage during his visit

The Voyage of the *H.M.S. Monarch*



The *H.M.S. Monarch*

—When George Peabody died at Sir Curtis Lampson's home, newspapers all over Europe and the U.S. carried the news. The next day, the Dean of Westminster Abbey, Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, then in Naples, Italy, telegraphed London his wishes that "by reason of his benefactions to the City of London [Peabody] was entitled to a burial in Westminster Abbey."

Though Lampson understood this desire, he felt caught between honoring Peabody's wishes to be buried at home and the increasing sentiment that Peabody must be honored in England. When the compromise was reached to inter Peabody in Westminster Abbey for a short time, Queen Victoria then requested that her Man-Of-War, the *H.M.S. Monarch*, be employed to bring Peabody to his final resting place in Salem. The *Monarch* was commanded by Captain John Edmund Commerell, a recipient of the Victoria Cross.

The Ship's crew proceeded to prepare for this honor. They built a bier on the main deck to hold Peabody's coffin for the short journey to the Spithead. A canopy was erected over the bier to protect the coffin from the elements until it could be transferred to the mortuary chapel below deck, which was constructed by ship's carpenters and hired dressmakers.

When word arrived in the U.S. of the arrangements, the U.S.S. *Plymouth* was dispatched to accompany the British ship for the voyage. The *Plymouth's* captain was no less distinguished than the commander of the *Monarch*. Captain William H. Macomb had served on many ships before the Civil War and during that War commanded the U.S. Naval force that captured Plymouth, North Carolina.

The American ship arrived in Portsmouth, England on

December 6th. From Portsmouth, the ships journeyed to the Spithead, where they transferred Peabody's coffin from the shelter on the main deck into the mortuary chapel built below deck. Unfortunately, a ferocious Atlantic storm swooped in, preventing them from leaving the Spithead until December 21st.

Because of the continuing fog, the crew of the *Monarch* seldom saw the faster sailing *Plymouth*. They met up again in Madeira on December 30th where they took on more supplies and coal. After a brief New Year's celebration, both ships returned to sea.

The *Monarch* Log, kept by Sub-Lieutenant Frederick Papillon notes ongoing drills and ship maintenance until their arrival in Bermuda where the American Consul came on board for the remainder of the journey. On January 20th, the *Monarch* and *Plymouth* turned north for Maine. Again and again, they encountered fog, forcing the ships to fire shots to identify their respective positions. At last, on January 25th, the ships arrived in Portland, Maine.

Both ship captains partook in the funerals in Portland and Peabody. After the burial in Harmony Grove, though, the *Monarch* didn't return at once to England. They sailed south to visit Annapolis Naval Academy, participated in celebrations of George Washington's birthday and enjoyed American hospitality until they set sail for England once again on March 4th, 1870.

"Rec'd the remains of the late George Peabody; (whose death was much lamented by all.) Hoisted American Flag halfmast at the fore. 3.20. Shipped & proceeded out of harbor. 4.20. Came to at Spithead. (12th) U.S. Corvette

"Rec'd the remains of the late George Peabody; (whose death was much lamented by all.) Hoisted American Flag halfmast at the fore. 3.20. Shipped & proceeded out of harbor. 4.20 Came to at Spithead."

From the December 11th, 1869 entry of the Logbook kept by the *Monarch's* Sub-Lieutenant Frederick Papillon regarding the voyage to bring George Peabody's body back to the United States

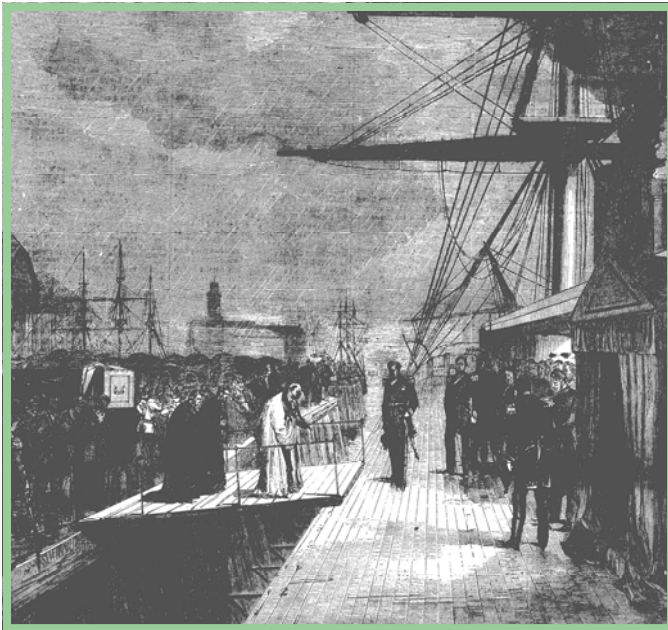
Transcription to the Right

The Funeral of George Peabody (Continued)

From there, his body was transported by the London and South-Western Railroad to Portsmouth, England where the British vessel, the *H.M.S. Monarch*, waited to carry Peabody home. With the Queen's Ship of War was the *U.S.S. Plymouth*, sent by the United States to accompany the *Monarch* for the voyage. A portion of the *Monarch's* lower deck had been converted by seamen and dressmakers into a mortuary chapel.

At 3:00 p.m., beneath a steady rain, the funeral train passed through an honor guard comprised of crew from the *Monarch* and *Plymouth*. In attendance was the U.S. Consul, as well as hundreds of English citizens come to pay their respects. The arrival of Peabody's body at the harbor was heralded with bugles, flags being lowered to half-mast and a twenty gun salute.

Eight seamen carried Peabody's coffin up the gangplank onto the *Monarch*. Sir Curtis Lampson, a close friend of Peabody followed with George Peabody Russell, Peabody's nephew. Also there was Junius S. Morgan, Peabody's former business partner, as well as other dignitaries.



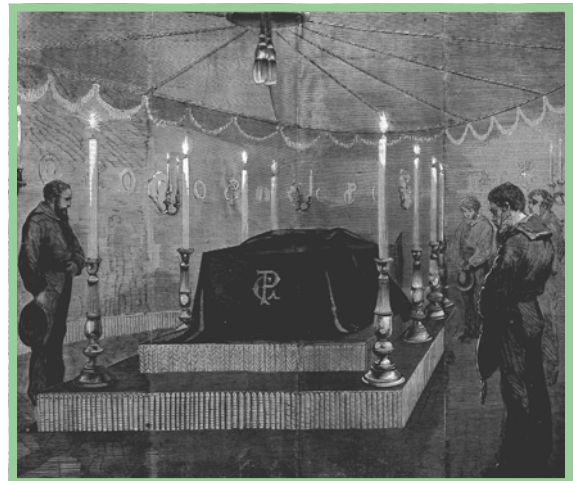
Peabody Remains Being
Carried onto Monarch

According to the log kept by the *Monarch's* Sub-Lieutenant Frederick Papillon, the British and U.S. ships sailed out of Portsmouth Harbor at 3:20 p.m., less than a half hour after the funeral train's arrival. They sailed to the Spithead, an inlet port located in Southern England that is well protected from winds, so the crew could finish loading the coal necessary for the voyage to the United States.

The journey took the *Monarch* and *Plymouth* to Madeira and then Bermuda, where they took on more coal and supplies before turning north for Portland, Maine.

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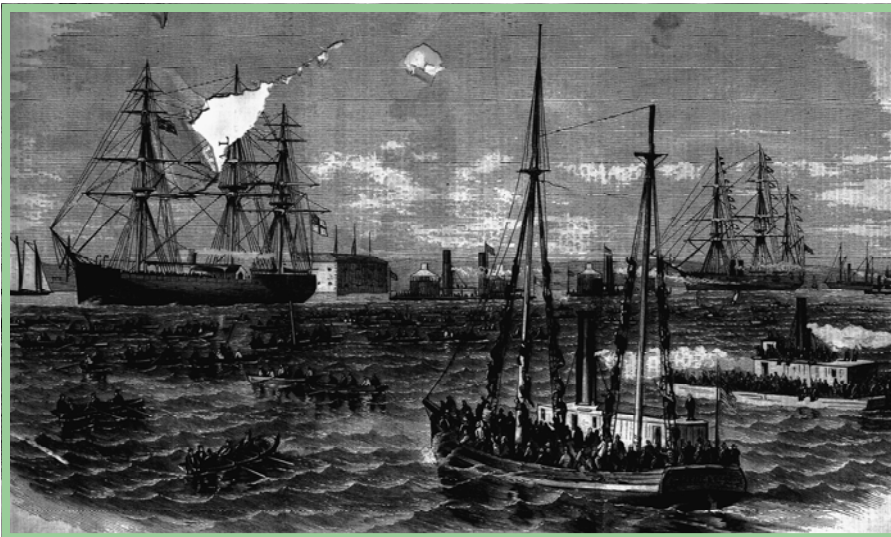
Mortuary Chapel on Monarch



The Funeral of George Peabody (Continued)

Because the *Monarch* was a warship, Boston's harbor was not deep enough to receive the vessel. This made Portland the next logical choice. Before their arrival however, the ships encountered thick fog south of New England, so thick that the *Monarch's* Captain Commerell ordered his men to fire their guns just so the *Plymouth* could locate their position. The *Monarch* and *Plymouth* arrived outside Portland harbor on January 25th, 1870. The next day, they sailed into Portland accompanied by the *Terror*, *Mahoning*, and the *Miantonomoh*. Thousands streamed into Portland to witness the event.

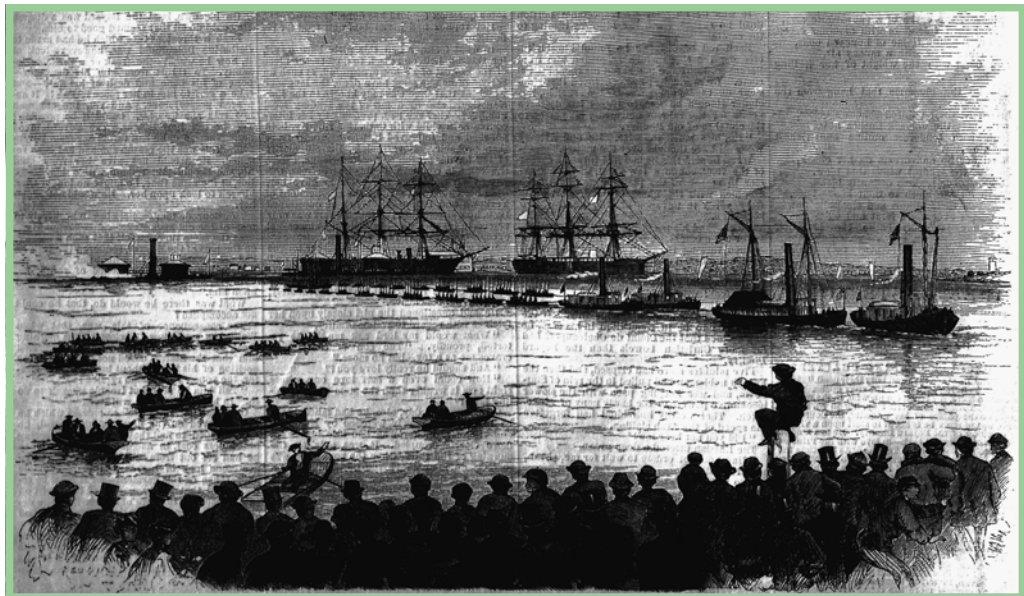
For two days, the *Monarch* remained in the harbor while George Peabody's body lay in state. Hundreds of people came on board for the viewing, among them Admiral David G. Farragut.



War Vessels
Terror, *Mahoning* and
Miantonomoh
Accompanying *Monarch*
into Portland

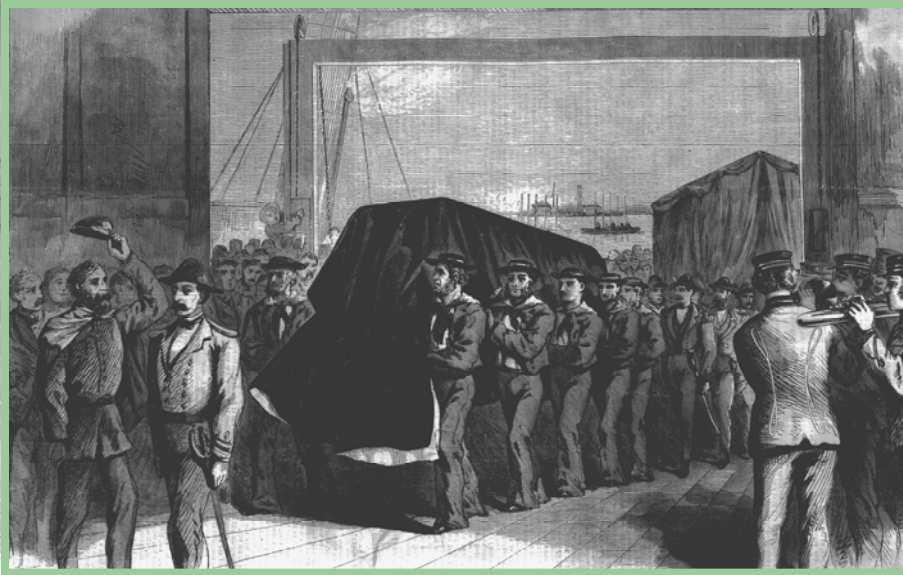
On January 29th George Peabody's casket was removed from the *Monarch* and transferred to a small tug that could bring Peabody to land. A flotilla of small vessels, including some from the *Monarch* and *Plymouth* accompanied the steamtug to land. As stated by the January 31st, 1870 *New York Times*, "Everything that can float—rowboats, sailboats, yachts, steamtugs—all are putting off for the fleet. . . just prior to the disembarkation," with the intent to join the flotilla as it carried Peabody's coffin to shore. (Continued on Page 6)

Flotilla of vessels
in the
Portland harbor
joining the
steamtug
carrying Peabody's
coffin to shore



The Funeral of George Peabody (Continued)

Page 6

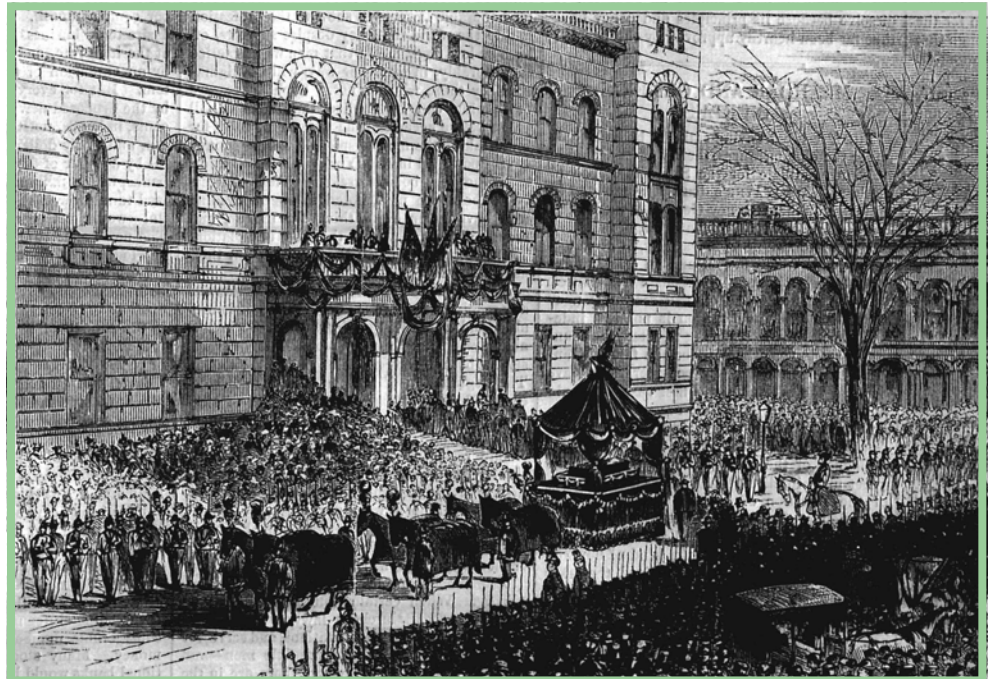


Peabody's Casket Being
Carried onto Land
In Portland, Maine

Once on land, a procession, which included Trustees from the Peabody Institute, the Portland Light Infantry, George Peabody Russell, the Mayor of Portland along with dozens of other dignitaries, continued to City Hall where Peabody lay in state for two more days.

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Procession with Peabody
Coffin Arriving at
Portland City Hall

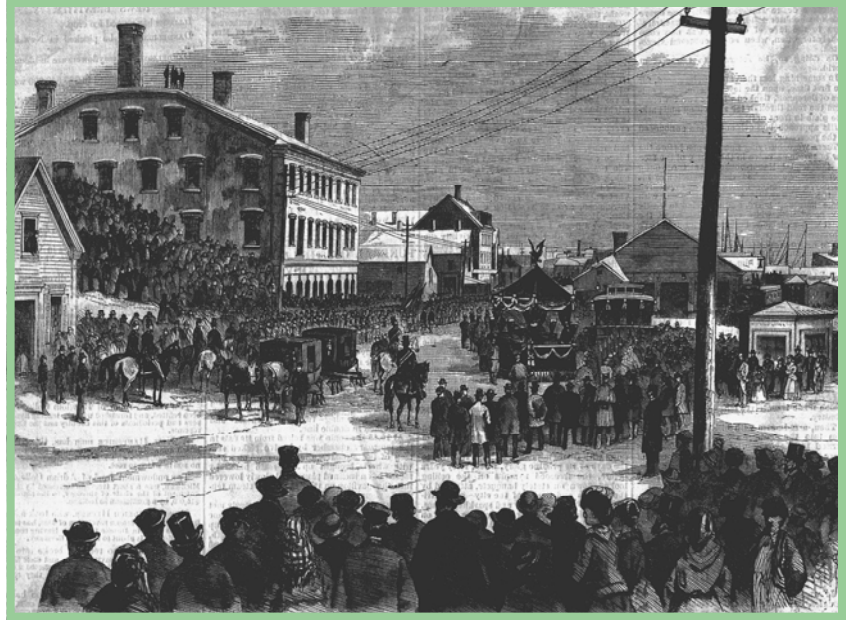


The Funeral of George Peabody (Continued)

Page 7

Ceremonies amounting to another funeral were conducted at City Hall and from there Peabody was carried to the funeral car prepared by the Eastern Railroad.

Departure of Peabody Casket from
Portland, Maine on Funeral Train



The train made brief stops in Kennebunk, Portsmouth, Newburyport and Ipswich to allow people to pay their respects. The train arrived in Peabody, Massachusetts on February 1, 1870.
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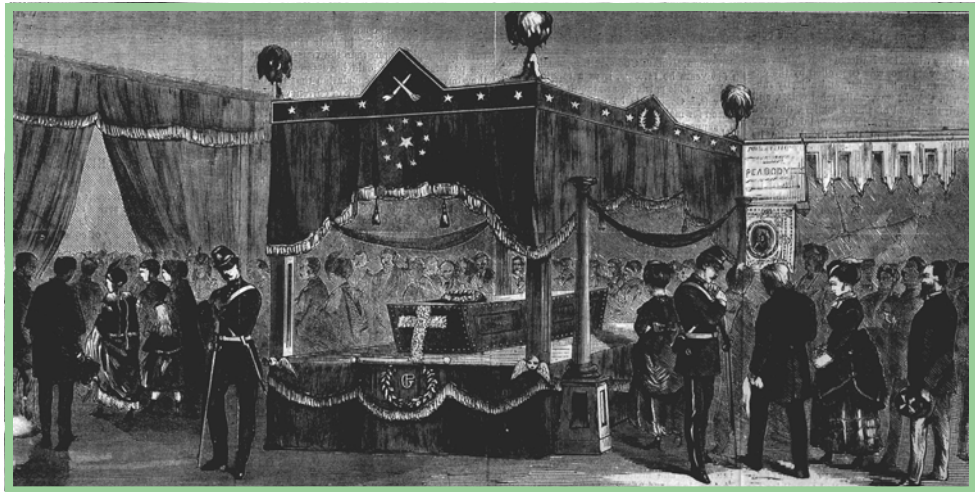
Peabody Funeral Train
Arrival in
Peabody, Massachusetts

The Funeral of George Peabody (Conclusion)

The coffin was carried a short distance to the Peabody Institute where George Peabody lay in state until the day of his final funeral, February 8th. The ceremony was held at the South Congregational Church, which was then located in the downtown area, on the present day site of the District Court. Thousands came, though not all could fit into the church. Among those who attended the funeral were the governors of Massachusetts and Maine, Charles Francis Adams, Queen Victoria's son, Prince Arthur, many Massachusetts mayors and the captains of the *Monarch* and *Plymouth*.

The procession from the church to Harmony Grove Cemetery in Salem included 200 sleighs. Because of the winter storm, the services at the cemetery were brief, allowing people to return to the Institute for a final gathering.

Peabody Lying in State
In Peabody Institute



Peabody Burial at Harmony Grove Cemetery



Works consulted for this newsletter:

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- * Transcript of Sub-Lieutenant Frederick Papillon, U.S.S. *Monarch*, 1867-1870.
- * Funeral Scrapbook for George Peabody, 1869-1870
- * Eulogy Pronounced at the Funeral of George Peabody at Peabody, Massachusetts, 8 February 1870 by Hon. Robert C. Winthrop.
- * "The Funeral of George Peabody" by Franklin Parker, Peabody Journal of Education, V. 44, No. 1, July 1966.
- * Mortuary Honors to the Late George Peabody in Portland, Maine, 1870.
- * New York Times, 1869-1870.
- * Mr. Peabody And Friends

For more articles and information, go to: www.peabodylibrary.org/history/index.html